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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 08 PESHAWAR 000120

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: FATA AND NWFP: WEEKLY INCIDENTS OF TALIBANIZATION, MAY 22 - MAY 28

REF: A) ISLAMABAD 1169; B) PESHAWAR 113; C) ISLAMABAD 1140; D) ISLAMABAD 1122; E) PESHAWAR 111

CLASSIFIED BY: Lynne Tracy, Principal Officer, U.S. Consulate Peshawar, U.S. Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (d)
Introduction

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¶1. (C) Pakistan's security forces continued to capture key locations in Swat during the fourth week of May. However, continuing last week's trend, the Taliban struck back by targeting security forces and civilians in four mass-casualty bombing attacks in Peshawar and one in Dera Ismail Khan, besides the high-profile bombing in Lahore (outside the scope of this cable) on May 27. Fighting cooled in Buner and Lower Dir, where only a few local engagements occurred and government officials invited residents to return to their homes. In the South Waziristan Agency (SWA), tit-for-tat fighting escalated as reinforced Pakistani military forces bombarded Baitullah Mehsud's fighters.

¶2. (SBU) Militants continued to attack policemen in Peshawar, Swat, Kohat, Haripur, Tank, and Dera Ismail Khan. One newspaper report claimed the militants paid a bounty (\$250) for the murder of police.

¶3. (C) Particularly in the areas around Swat and east of SWA, the Pakistani government stepped up its mobilization of local communities against Taliban elements, calling jirgas and leaning on them to form lashkars and to turn over fleeing militants. The government's increased community organizing activity this week may in part be a reaction to last week's resistance by the local community in Kalam (Upper Swat) to fleeing militants (ref E); while the resulting engagements between lashkars and

militants in this area were relatively minor, the Pakistani government was able to exploit them extensively in the press.

14. (SBU) The Pakistani government and military more generally ramped up their public relations drive against the militants over the week, allowing reporters into some of the secured areas of Swat and displaying captured facilities and militants. An emaciated 14-year-old boy, Muhammad Akhtar, rescued on May 22 by security forces at Baini Baba Ziarat, Shangla, was presented to the media and described how the Taliban had recruited him and dozens of other teenage boys by force and used the site as a terrorist training center.

NWFP - Malakand Division

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15. (SBU) The following incidents have occurred in the Malakand Division of the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP), where the Pakistani government has been conducting combat operations since the last week of April. Malakand Division includes the districts of Malakand, Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Chitral, Swat, Shangla, and Buner:

May 22, Swat: Militants killed three soldiers and injured ten. Two policemen were also found dead in Mingora. Militants blew up the home of Swat's leader in Shah Dheri of the Awami National Party (ANP), Khan Nawab. Military authorities showed journalist a letter from Mullah Omar, supreme commander of the Taliban,

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pledging financial and "moral support" to the Swat insurgents. Locals of Kalam, in Upper Swat, brokered a truce with the Taliban after clashes left four fighters from the two sides dead.

May 22, Shangla: Government troops captured Baini Baba Ziarat, a militant training center at 7,000 feet overlooking Swat valley.

May 22, Lower Dir: Militants attacked a security force convoy, killing an army officer and injuring four soldiers. 19 militants were also reported killed. Police established three new police stations in the towns of Chakdara, Talash, and Sher Mohammed (near Swat). Local leaders claimed that they successfully negotiated an agreement with the Taliban insisting that the militants immediately leave the area of Adenzai tehsil. Major General Sajjad Ghani said that locals were raising their own lashkars to confront militants.

May 23, Swat: Security forces claimed to kill 17 militants and begin street fighting in Mingora after clearing Qambar, a key Taliban stronghold 3 km outside the city. Security forces killed a suicide bomber in one town and destroyed a suicide vehicle in another. Helicopters bombarded the Barikot area for the first time. The NWFP Information Minister, Mian Iftikhar Hussain, announced that militants would be tried before Qazi courts under the Nizam-i-Adl Regulation.

May 23, Lower Dir: Militants began leaving the district while the government conducted search and cordon operations.

May 24, Swat: Militants killed four security personnel, set off 12 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and launched a suicide car attack. Government troops secured eight important intersections in Mingora, and reported killing 10 militants and arresting 14. 20 militants were killed in Malam Jabba.

May 24, Shangla: Helicopter gunships bombarded militant hideouts in the Yakh Tangi Top region; the military claimed to have killed several militants.

May 24, Lower Dir: Security forces blew up the home of a militant commander in Maidan.

May 25, Swat: Militants injured six government troops. Security forces reclaimed Malam Jabba, arrested eight militants and killed four. A newspaper report claimed the Taliban were running short of "money, men and weapons." Maulana Fazlullah reportedly asked his men to stop battling government troops in Mingora.

May 25, Lower Dir: Security forces arrested three militants who had posed as IDPs. Militants assaulted a Frontier Corps checkpoint near Maidan, killing two Chitral Scouts. Security forces reported they had killed 20 militants

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May 26, Swat: Militants killed six soldiers and wounded 11 others. Security forces claimed to capture half of Mingora, killing 29 militants.

May 26, Malakand: Militants blew up the Pakistan Television (PTV) tower in the mountains of Thana.

May 27, Swat: The government announced cash rewards of 5 million rupees for the arrest of Maulana Fazlullah, 4 million for Muslim Khan, and special awards for 22 other Taliban commanders. More than 250 Taliban fighters reportedly fled Swat's northernmost town, Kalam, after hearing that Pakistani Army troops were advancing toward them.

May 27, Buner: Security forces launched a ground operation to secure the Gokand Valley.

May 27, Lower Dir: Troops clashed with militants in Maidan.

May 28, Swat: Militants ambushed a convoy of eight Army trucks, killing four soldiers. Security forces reported they had killed seven militants and arrested four others. A newspaper report claimed that Taliban in Swat paid mercenaries to kill police and army troops, with one Afghan admitting he was paid \$250 to kill a policeman.

NWFP - Hazara Division

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16. (SBU) The following incidents have occurred in the Hazara Division of the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) according to press and consulate contacts. Hazara Division includes the districts of Kohistan, Mansehra, Battagram, Abbottabad, and Haripur:

May 25, Battagram: A jirga in the Allai tehsil declared its willingness to use force against militants if they tried to infiltrate their areas.

May 26, Haripur: Gunmen killed three policemen and injured two others when attacking their mobile van.

May 28, Mansehra: A grand jirga of Kala Dhaka, a tehsil bordering Buner district, raised two separate lashkars to restrict the possible infiltration of militants fleeing from Buner and Swat. The lashkars stated they would also watch the movement of IDPs.

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NWFP - Peshawar Division

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18. (C) The following incidents have occurred in the Peshawar Division of the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) according to press and consulate contacts. Peshawar Division includes the districts of Peshawar, Nowshera, and Charsadda:

May 22, Peshawar: Militants set off a timed 65 kg bomb outside a movie theater in Peshawar in the evening as patrons were departing from a show, killing ten and injuring 75. Elsewhere, terrorists threw two hand grenades at a police post.

May 23, Peshawar: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Fauzia Wahab announced that she and other PPP parliamentarians had received threatening letters from the Taliban warning of dire consequences if they did not give up support of the military operation in Swat and other areas of Malakand.

May 24, Charsadda: Police claimed to arrest seven militants and recover three suicide vests during a raid on a madrassa.

May 24, Peshawar: Pakistani security forces arrested seven persons suspected of being involved in a plot to assassinate NWFP Senior Minister Bashir Bilour.

May 25, Peshawar: Taliban blew up a CD shop and a police post, with no casualties reported.

May 28, Peshawar: Militants detonated three bombs in the city. Militants planted two timed bombs on motorbikes in the historic Qissa Khwani Bazaar, killing six and injuring 100. Gunmen on rooftops ambushed police as they arrived at the scene. A gunfight between militants and police lasted for almost an hour before police killed two militants and arrested two others. A suicide bomber drove a pickup truck into a police van at the Sra Khawra security post on Kohat road, near Matani, 20 km outside the city, killing three policemen and injuring several others. Militants reportedly sent threatening letters demanding that female counselors be fired or their offices would be bombed.

NWFP - Kohat Division

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¶9. (SBU) The following incidents have occurred in the Kohat Division of the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) according to press and consulate contacts. Kohat Division includes the districts of Kohat, Karak, and Hangu:

May 22, Kohat: Police arrested 28 suspects, including three Afghans, during a search operation.

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May 22, Hangu: Militants blew up two homes.

May 25, Kohat: Militants killed three policemen. An intense gunfight followed, but the attackers escaped.

May 25, Hangu: Militants destroyed a girls' school.

NWFP - Bannu Division

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¶10. (SBU) The following incidents have occurred in the Bannu Division of the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) according to press and consulate contacts. Bannu Division includes the districts of Bannu and Lakki Marwat:

May 22, Bannu: A local tribe assured the government of its full support and guaranteed that no foreigner was present in the area.

May 24, Lakki Marwat: A jirga met to discuss law and order in the district.

May 26, Lakki Marwat: A bullet-riddled body was found in a river.

NWFP - Dera Ismail Khan Division

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¶11. (SBU) The following incidents have occurred in the Dera Ismail Khan Division of the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) according to press and consulate contacts. Dera Ismail Khan Division includes the districts of Dera Ismail Khan and Tank:

May 25, Dera Ismail Khan: Militants riding on a motorbike killed three Shi'a laborers at a construction site.

May 26, Tank: Two policemen were injured when their vehicle hit an improvised explosive device (IED).

May 26, Dera Ismail Khan: A militant threw a grenade at a house, killing a man and injuring three of his family members.

May 28, Dera Ismail Khan: A suicide bomber rammed his explosive-laden vehicle into a security checkpoint, killing a police officer and 11 others, besides wounding 20.

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Northern FATA

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¶12. (SBU) The following is a roundup of incidents of talibanization in the Bajaur, Mohmand, and Khyber Agencies of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA):

May 22, Mohmand: Haleemzai tribe elders handed over two wanted persons to the local administration at a jirga.

May 23, Bajaur: Militants kidnapped two Bajaur Scouts from Khar. The local administration retaliated by arresting 179 tribesmen of Mohmand tribe and taking more than two dozen of their vehicles into custody. Political Agent Shairullah Khan warned the Mohmand tribe in a jirga of a security operation if the tribe continued to violate the peace agreement it had made with the government three months ago.

May 23, Mohmand: Militants blew up a government high school in Ambar tehsil.

May 24, Mohmand: Militants fired a mortar that killed one and injured three others in Ambar tehsil. Two bodies were discovered elsewhere in Ambar.

May 24, Khyber: Three khassadars were kidnapped by unknown parties; one was released.

May 26, Mohmand: Security forces killed two militants, who they claimed were from Waziristan, in Mamad Gat. Separately, police arrested four men suspected of plotting to blow up a government school in the Michni area.

May 27, Khyber: Lashkar-i-Islam "arrested" a local cleric and six of his followers who allegedly had been involved in the murder of a Lahore resident near Bara; Mangal Bagh announced that they would be tried at a shura meeting on May 30 and invited the victim's heirs to attend and testify at the meeting.

May 28, Mohmand: Security forces arrested two relatives of militant commander in the Matta Mughelkhel region. A jirga formed by Halimzai tribal elders met and pledged its support to government efforts to rein in militancy.

May 28, Khyber: Security forces reportedly arrested 20 suspected militants and their financiers in Jamrud and Bara tehsils.

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Southern FATA

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¶13. (SBU) The following is a roundup of incidents of talibanization in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Frontier Regions south of the Khyber Agency:

May 22, South Waziristan: Government forces bombarded suspected Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) positions in Srarogha, Kotkai, and Spinkai Raghzai villages; contacts reported that the shelling was a retaliation for the May 21 bombing of an FC post.

May 22, FR Tank: Locals found four bodies in Jandola. Residents tried to flee the area, but the main roads were blocked.

May 24, Orakzai: Fighter jets and helicopter gunships bombed suspected militant hideouts; the military claimed to have killed 13 fighters and two civilians.

May 25, South Waziristan: Militants fired rockets at two nearby forts. Militants fired another rocket into a residential neighborhood, injuring three children.

May 25, FR Tank: Security forces moved tanks and heavy artillery into Jandola.

May 26, South Waziristan: Security forces continued shelling Mehsud villages, and claimed to have killed seven militants.

May 26, Orakzai: Militants blew up a shrine in Ghiljo tehsil.

May 27, South Waziristan: Security forces reported that they had destroyed several bunkers, seized two vehicles loaded with heavy weapons, and killed 10 militants.

May 27, FR Kohat: Militants fired rockets and small arms at a newly established security checkpoint in the Darra Adam Khel area.

May 28, South Waziristan: Taliban in South Waziristan reportedly began planting landmines in their area.

May 28, Kurram: Hundreds of Pakistani government troops reportedly deployed to the agency from Hangu district.

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May 28, FR Kohat: Security forces reportedly arrested eight militants and blew up three hideouts during a search operation.

Government and Community Response

14. (SBU) This is a summary of government and community activities undertaken outside of the NWFP and FATA to halt the spread of talibanization within those regions:

May 22, Islamabad: Prime Minister Gilani has reportedly ordered a probe to determine whether former Commissioner of Malakand division Syed Mohammad Javed aided and abetted the Taliban. Javed was removed from his post on April 30 after allegedly negotiating with Buner leaders to permit Taliban men to enter the district. Javed denied widespread rumors that he was involved in the Taliban's execution of four SSG commandos captured in Swat.

May 27, Islamabad: The head of the Pakhtun Amn Jirga announced the formation of a "Pakhtun Amn Lashkar" which would recruit one hundred men from each of the union councils (Pakistan's most local unit of government) in Swat, Buner, and Lower Dir.
TRACY